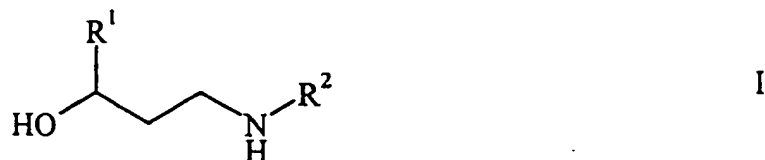


## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A process for the preparation of a compound of formula



and/or an addition salt of a proton acid, wherein R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> independently represent alkyl, cycloalkyl, aryl or aralkyl, each aryl or aralkyl being optionally further substituted with alkyl, alkoxy and/or halogen, which process comprises the following steps:

(a) reacting a mixture comprising (i) a methyl ketone of formula



wherein R<sup>1</sup> is as defined above, and (ii) a compound of formula

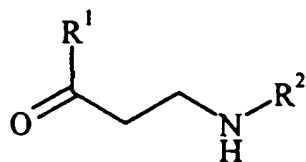


and/or an addition salt of proton acid, wherein R<sup>2</sup> is as defined above, and

(iii) formaldehyde or a source of formaldehyde selected from the group consisting of formaldehyde in aqueous solution, 1,3, 5-trioxane, paraformaldehyde and mixtures thereof, in the presence of

a solvent selected from the group consisting of water, aliphatic alcohols, cycloaliphatic alcohols and mixtures thereof, and optionally a proton acid

to afford a  $\beta$ -amino ketone of formula



II

and/or an addition salt of a proton acid, and (b) reducing the carbonyl group of said  $\beta$ -amino ketone to afford a compound of formula I, and/or an addition salt of a proton acid wherein the first step is carried out at a pressure above 1.5 bar.